

Bhante Henepola Gunaratana Bhavana Society West Virginia USA

18 May 2026

Bhavana Society weblink <https://bhavanasociety.org/>

Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravada) (BGKT) Founder Spiritual Advisors

Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravada) (BGKT) is very fortunate to have as its founder Spiritual Advisors two senior Theravada Buddhist *Bhikkhus* [Monks] Venerable Dr Balangoda Ananda Maitreya and Bhante Henepola Gunaratana. BGKT will always remember them with gratitude for their inspiration and indefatigable efforts to develop Theravada Buddhism in the West.

Bhante Henepola Gunaratana Maha Thera (1927-)

Bhante Henepola Gunaratana was born in Sri Lanka in 1927. He became a Novice Monk at the age of 12 and received full ordination in 1947 at the age of 20. He moved to the USA in 1968. He is Founding Abbot of the Bhavana Society (which he co-founded in 1985) in West Virginia USA. In 1996 he was awarded the title Chief Sangha Nayaka [Head Theravada *Bhikkhu* [Buddhist Monk]] of North America. He has led meditation retreats, and taught Buddhism in the USA, Canada, Europe, and Australia. He is an internationally respected meditation master and author.

He has visited BGKT Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravada) and Keswick Buddhist Group (Theravada) and taught a 1995 meditation retreat for these groups in Cumbria England.

Teachings in BGKT Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravada)'s Open Meetings are based on *Mindfulness in Plain English*, *Loving-Kindness in Plain English*, *Start Here, Start Now: A Short Guide to Mindfulness Meditation* and the *In Plain English* series by Bhante Henepola Gunaratana published by Wisdom Experience.

Bhante Henepola Gunaratana gave *Upasika* Canda (a member of BGKT Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravada)) her Buddhist name and *Panca Sila* (Five Precepts) at a retreat in for BGKT and Keswick Buddhist Group (Theravada) in Cumbria England on 14 April 1995.

The Eight Lifetime Precepts are an expansion of *Ajivatthamaka Sila* (Eight Precepts with Right Livelihood as the Eighth). The first seven Precepts are the same but the eighth Precept is an amalgamation of the eighth Precept of *Ajivatthamaka Sila* and the fifth Precept of *Panca Sila* (The Five Precepts): I undertake the training rule to abstain from wrong livelihood and from intoxicating drinks and drugs causing heedlessness.

Bhavana Vandana: Devotions for Meditation explains The Eight Lifetime Precepts on page x of the Introduction and in Part One Refugees and Precepts on pages 6-9.

"Eight Lifetime Precepts

The second selection in the book provides an opportunity for lay devotees to take the Eight Lifetime Precepts. These include the five basic precepts plus three other precepts relating to right speech. In addition to abstain from false speech, one who takes the Eight Lifetime Precepts promises to abstain from malicious speech, from harsh speech, and from useless speech. The basic precept to refrain from intoxicants

is expanded to include right livelihood, aligning the way we earn our living with the principles of Dhamma. These precepts mirror the right action, right speech, and right livelihood sections of the Noble Eightfold Path.”

Buddhist Suttas for Recitation: A Companion for Walking the Buddha's Path explains The Eight Lifetime Precepts on page xxvii of the Introduction and in Part One Refuges and Precepts on pages 8-11.

Bhante Henepola Gunaratana described the development of the Eight Lifetime Precepts in his 2001 book *Eight Mindful Steps to Happiness: Walking the Path of the Buddha* in Step 4 Skillful Action: Higher Precepts for Laypeople on pages 125-126. The Eight Lifetime Precepts were first offered at the Bhavana Society in 1998 for the 10th anniversary of the Bhavana Society.

Upasika Panna (a member of BGKT Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravada)) received her Buddhist name and the Eight Lifetime Precepts from Bhante Henepola Gunaratana at Gaia House in Devon England on 6 June 2007.

Bibliography Bhante Henepola Gunaratana

Books

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Websites

weblink<https://bhavanasociety.org/>

Wisdom Experience

Wisdom Experience weblink<https://wisdomexperience.org/>

Bhante Henepola Gunaratana

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Articles by Bhante Henepola Gunaratana

“Meditation on Loving-Kindness”, Bhante Henepola Gunaratana, *Buddhist Publication Society Newsletter*, No. 69 (1st mailing 2013), pages 1-5.

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“Meditation on Loving-Kindness”, Bhante Henepola Gunaratana, *The Middle Way: Journal of The Buddhist Society [London]*, 64(4), (February 1990), pages 232-238. (The Buddhist Society [London] (founded in 1924) started *The Middle Way: Journal of The Buddhist Society* [London] in 1926.) (ISSN 0026-3214)

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Audio and Video by Bhante Henepola Gunaratana

There are several audio and video recordings of Bhante Gunaratana on the internet.